Diversion of EAS funds by DGHC

2438. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a huge amount was diverted to Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in 1998-99 on account of E.A.S.;

(b) if so, what is the quantum of money;

(c) whether it is also a fact that due to this, adequate funds have not reached the Block and Panchayat level of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong; and

(d) for what purpose the money is being spent by DGHC and where?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) to (d) During 1998-99, first instalment of Employment Assurance Scheme amounting to Rs. 180 lakh, required to be remitted to Siliguri Mahakuma Rural Development Agency, was inadvertently remitted to the account of Darjeeling Council Rural Development Agency under the control of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. Due to this inadvertent remittance, the funds have not reached to the block covered under Siliguri Mahakuma Rural Development Agency. This Ministry has requested the Chairman, Darjeeling Council Rural Development Agency to transfer the funds to Siliguri Mahakuma Rural Development Agency. The West Bengal Government has also informed that they have also requested the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council to remit this amount to the Siliguri Mahakuma Rural Development Agency.

Poverty alleviation programme in Andhra Pradesh

2439. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether United Nations Development Programme proposed to undertake poverty alleviation programmes in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the programme is expected to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assisted Poverty Alleviation Project in India (RAS/96/600) is currently under implementation in 20 mandals in three districts of Mahabubnagar, Kumool and Ananthapur of Andhra Pradesh.

(b) The basic objective of the project is to demonstrate sustainable and replicable initiatives in social mobilisation for poverty alleviation. The project facilitated organisation of poor into 2,981 self-help groups with 45,567 members in 20 mandals in 3 districts. The self-help groups of women have demonstrated sound group management and financial management norms. The women groups have been enabled to build their own capital through savings to a tune of Rs. 32.71 millions and succeeded in accessing credit for sustainable livelihoods to a tune of Rs. 59.20 millions Rs. 29.57 millions under programme assistance and Rs. 29.63 millions from formal credit institutions and revolving fund under (DWCRA).

(c) The programme is currently under implementation since 1996.

Satellite based Communication Network for Rural Development

2440. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a satellite based communications network for rural development operations spread across the country has been proposed in the draft report of Information Technology Plan for Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main recommendations of the Report are:

(i) Building an advanced IT framework to support rural development administration.